



**BOURKE
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

“From the
General Manager’s Desk”

14 September 2023

Back O’ Bourke Stampede

The Back O’ Bourke Stampede-Peter Simmonds Memorial Pro-Rodeo is now only a month away with preparations well and truly underway for the Saturday 14 October 2023 event to be held at Bourke’s Renshaw Oval. With what will undoubtedly be a fantastic day of thrills and spills, gates for the event will open to the public at 10.00am on the day in time to view the preliminary rides. At 3pm, the live musical entertainment commences and at 6pm, the main events get underway. With food and trade stalls on hand along with a licenced bar and fireworks display, full credit to the organising committee for their hard work to bring this exciting event to fruition for the people of the Bourke region.

Originally planned for Saturday 15 October 2022 and then on Saturday 3 December 2022, the Pro-Rodeo was postponed on two occasions due to the spate of wet weather and flooding that was occurring across western NSW at the time. Committee Chairman Stuart Gordon said it right at the time of the initial postponement when he stated in a media release, “Events such as the Stampede are expensive to conduct and for the Committee to proceed with the event at this point and establish the site, bring rodeo stock, pro-riders and members of the public all potentially travelling to Bourke during next week, only for the event to be ultimately cancelled on the day, would result in many thousands of dollars being incurred for no return.” At this point the weather for the 2023 event is expected to be fine, warm and sunny.

Australia’s elite cowboys, cowgirls and Big Al the Rodeo Clown will all be in attendance, and with the event being affiliated with the Australian Professional Rodeo Association (APRA), championship points are up for grabs by competitors. Being an APRA affiliated event means that the best stock will be in attendance and the Committee has engaged Garry McPhee and Gill Bros Rodeo Stock for the event. With both these stock providers having basically been around the rodeo circuit all their lives and having each won numerous awards for “Bucking Stock of the Year,” between them they will undoubtedly present stock that provide tough competition for the riders.

These types of events are expensive to put on and in addition to the hard-working Committee, thanks are extended to the NSW Government who have provided substantial funding to ensuring that this event is not only successful and feasible, but also that it is an affordable activity for the community to attend. Entry fees, payable at the gate, is \$10.

Agritourism

Australian Regional Tourism Ltd defines agritourism as “a type of experiential travel which connects people to product or produce, delivered on farming land through a direct “on farm” experience.” A layman’s example of agritourism are the ever-popular farm stays. Other examples of agritourism include

the hosting of events, such as tours, weddings, conferences, and other functions; setting up a business such as a store or café, for tastings or workshops, to highlight farm produce; or the building of a roadside stall on a farm. Regardless of what the agritourism activity is, Bourke Shire has some excellent examples of a popular segment of the nation's tourist market.

The NSW Department of Planning has now introduced clearer planning terms for agritourism with an amending State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) having been made by the NSW Government in August 2023. This has resulted in local environmental plans being amended to expand the permissibility of agritourism across NSW. This will make it easier for farmers to know how they can use their land for new income streams.

The new changes mean agritourism (which includes farm experience premises and farm gate premises) will be permitted with consent in all RU1 Primary Production, RU2 Rural Landscape and RU4 Primary Production Small Lots zones in the Bourke Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). The amended SEPP has also removed the 100 visitors limit to farm gate premises for pick-your-own produce under exempt and complying development in State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. Farmers now have greater flexibility to invite more visitors to buy their produce.

The NSW Department of Planning will shortly be making available guides to the setting up of an agritourism business for interested landowners. More information is available on their website at: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au> and search for agritourism.

Darling River

It doesn't seem all that long ago that the Darling River at Bourke was at a near record flood level of 13.95 metres. As I write this column, a quick check of the Water NSW website shows that the river is at a level of 4.08 metres. At this reduced level the community is only 110mm or 11cm away from water ceasing to flow over the Bourke weir. Unfortunately, at that point it will be necessary for water restrictions to be once again imposed on the community. After the amount of water that flowed past Bourke in last year's floods, and despite Councils continued efforts to increase the height of the Bourke Weir, restrictions are somewhat of a bitter pill. This is also the case given that regional storages in NSW, as at the beginning of September 2023, are 94% of the total accessible storage capacity, compared to 98% this time last year. The raising of the weir would result in the capacity of the Bourke Weir Pool to be significantly increased.

In terms of the climate outlook, the Bureau of Meteorology has updated their long-range weather forecast overview for September – November 2023 which provides that below median rainfall is very likely for most inland areas in NSW; above median minimum and maximum temperatures are very likely, and the Bureau continues to be at El Niño Alert level. The Bureau has produced a long-range weather forecast overview video, and this is available for viewing at: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/video>

Sport

The roll out of high-quality sport continues with September traditionally being the culmination of the winter sport program across the nation. At this point we are well into the semi-finals of the National Rugby League, Union and Australian rules competitions for both men and women. This year, hot on the heels of the Women's Soccer World Cup in Australia and NZ, we have the added interest in September and October of the Rugby World Cup. I am not so sure as to how far the Wallabies will progress in this competition, however regardless I am sure each of the Aussies will be giving it their absolute best. On

top of this, the Australian Cricket Side is touring India playing one day games and various T20 games, the ICC One Day format Cricket World Cup is also on in India and then in December, Pakistan starts its cricket tour of Australia. It is a sportspersons delight!

As for my team in the NRL, the Tigers, we picked up the wooden spoon for the second year in a row. As they say, the only way is up. Enjoy the viewing at a great time of the sporting year.

Young Offenders

I was interested to read a recent report in the Sydney Morning Herald that stated that “Statistics show a significant rise in the number of 14-year-olds facing legal proceedings over breaking into houses in the past five years, and an increase in the number of 11 to 14-year-olds facing action over vehicle theft.” Such report was off the back of a worrying increase in the number of unlicensed minors driving stolen cars, particularly after a series of crashes involving teenagers.” With respect, this isn’t news for many folk in our town. Unfortunately, many residents or visitors have experienced such crime and it was why Bourke Council previously resolved that it write to the Prime Minister, the NSW Premier, and others, “expressing Councils absolute opposition to an increase in the age of criminal responsibility from ten years to fourteen years.” One can only imagine the carnage that would ensue in the event that the age of criminal responsibility was increased to 14 years of age. Seriously, the actions of some young offenders is damaging enough with the existing laws.

Quote: “He’s a \$7 million dollar bull rider.....J B Mauney.” World champion bull rider J B Mauney has won more money than any other bull rider in history, over \$7 million.